



Grafton Affordable Housing Trust
30 Providence Road
Grafton, MA 01519

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MEETING MINUTES
Grafton Affordable Housing Trust
Thursday, April 13, 2023
7:45pm
Conference Room F
Grafton Memorial Municipal Center

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:49pm by Chair Bruce Spinney. In attendance were Chair Bruce Spinney, Select Board Representative Mat Often, Clerk Dan Cusher, Brittany Morgan, and Eric Swenson. Staff in attendance were Town Planner Fiona Coughlan and Administrative Assistant Amber Diffenderfer.

Executive Session

Mr. Spinney stated that the purpose of the Executive Session is to discuss the bids for 25 Worcester Street, and the Trust will return to open session after the executive session is complete.

Mr. Spinney announced that the Trust would enter executive session under G.L. c. 30A, §21,(a)(6) To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and I, the Chair, declare that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body;

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Mr. Cusher to enter executive session. Motion passed 5 – 0 by roll call vote.

1. Consider Vote to Award Bid for 25 Worcester Street RFP

The Trust reconvened in open session at 9:00pm.

Mr. Spinney stated that two bids were received for this RFP, one was disqualified, and the remaining bid was from Worcester Community Housing Resources.

In reviewing the Comparative Evaluation Criteria, the Trust did not have any questions about the Developer Experience & Capacity (Team).

The Trust discussed WCHR's proposed affordability, which ranges from 30-80% AMI.

Andy Howarth, Director of Development and Financing at WCHR, and Indrek Buttner, member of the WCHR Board of Directors, introduced themselves to the Trust and spoke about the organization's background.

Ms. Morgan and Mr. Howarth discussed the intention for the project to be LEED certifiable.

Mr. Often and Mr. Howarth spoke about building the parking lot to support electric vehicle charging stations and engineering the roof to accept solar. Mr. Howarth stated that Graves Engineering would be responsible for stormwater management at the site.

Mr. Often asked how the proposed building configuration was chosen. Mr. Howarth stated that two buildings did not seem cost feasible and described the benefits of a centrally located

elevator. He noted that the shape of the building allows for a planting buffer on both sides and a recreation area in the back. He also described the advantages of the parking configuration.

Mr. Cusher expressed concern that the topography was not considered in the site design. Mr. Spinney and Mr. Howarth discussed the slope of the parking lot. Mr. Spinney and Ms. Morgan noted the proximity of the neighbors. Mr. Spinney appreciated the parking spaces in front. Mr. Spinney, Ms. Morgan, and Mr. Howarth highlighted the importance of providing a level-grade for the building, entrances, and primary parking.

Regarding the building design, Ms. Morgan noted that the singular long building does not seem to fit the context of the area and described ways to create some dimension. Mr. Howarth spoke about the design and materials used for other projects by WCHR. Mr. Often stated that this property is located in a historic district and must be compatible.

To answer a question from Ms. Morgan, Mr. Howarth stated that 10% of the units would be fully accessible. He noted that all units would be built to allow accessibility features to be added as residents need them.

Mr. Howarth stated that WCHR is not currently a LIHTC certified property manager but intends to be fully certified by the time the building is ready for occupancy.

Mr. Often made a motion seconded by Mr. Cusher to award the bid to Worcester Community Housing Resources, Inc. Motion passed 5 – 0 by roll call vote.

Mr. Howarth stated that he expects to receive funding from DHCD in 2025 and begin construction in 2026.

Mr. Spinney spoke about the ZBA's process, the current LIP proposals in town, and Grafton's loss of safe harbor status.

2. Review the First Draft of the Housing Production Plan

Mr. Spinney stated that the Trust would meet the following week via Zoom to review the Housing Production Plan with the consultant. He asked that all feedback be directed to Ms. Diffenderfer.

Adjourn

Mr. Swenson made a motion seconded by Mr. Often to adjourn. Motion passed 5 – 0 by roll call vote at 10:00pm.

Meeting materials are available at: <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/Affordable-Housing-Trust-3>

A recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/-TQ9XcNpbPY>